

Significance of and Challenges in Lateral Entry

Why in news?

The Centre has recently appointed 9 non-governmental professionals selected by the UPSC, under the lateral entry scheme.

Click [here](#) to know more on the earlier government notification.

What is the significance of the move?

- Globalisation has made the business of governance an increasingly complex activity.
- It demands specialist skills and knowledge like never before.
- Given this, the appointments under the lateral entry scheme is a sensible first step towards accessing a wider talent pool.
- The move directly inducts private sector experts into the ranks of the civil service, with specified posts and salary scales and perks.
- The move marks a great leap forward in the institutional outlook of the UPSC.

What are the challenges involved?

- Inducting private sector experts into line functions involves a host of institutional challenges.
- Chief among them is the quality of people who are hired.
- External experts have to meet a specified educational qualification norm.
- Those shortlisted should undergo UPSC interviews before signing on.
- But it is unclear whether this is an optimal way of inducting external experts.
- The second challenge is how far the government can leverage the lateral entrants' expertise.
- This requires the creation of an enabling environment for them to function, who may find it difficult in a bureaucratic environment.
- It's because it demands a high degree of cooperation from the bureaucracy, where exists already the tension between generalists and specialists.
- External experts also discover that the basics such as access to files and to ministerial meetings can become matters of high politics.
- Much, therefore, depends on how far the political executive is willing to facilitate the functioning of these external experts.

Click [here](#) to read more on the concerns with the lateral entry scheme

What lies ahead?

- Going beyond the civil services, it is now time for the government to widen the ambit of its search for regulatory heads.
- At present, most of the selection of sectoral regulators or tribunal heads appears to be earmarked for retired bureaucrats and public sector company chiefs.
- Beyond this, there is certainly a wealth of talent in the Indian private sector and the diaspora that the government could access.
- Utilising these could improve the quality of policy decision-making.
- In the larger context, therefore, lateral entries into the civil services would be a good test case.

Source: Business Standard

